

AMENDMENTS TO AND LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) A chewable confectionery composition comprising:

a) an enzyme extracted from natural fruit products that is incorporated into a gum base;

b) a non-cariogenic sweetener; and

c) an enzyme stabilizing agent which is a metal chelating agent or an antioxidation agent;

wherein the composition contains less than 5% by weight water; ~~the composition is prepared by a process wherein the enzyme is processed at a temperature less than about 80°C;~~ the enzyme is incorporated into the composition at a temperature of less than 80°C; and the enzyme maintains its initial activity over at least a 4 week period when stored at 23 ~~degrees C~~°C.

12-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the enzyme is papain or bromelain and is present at a concentration of about 0.1 to 3% by weight.

17. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 16, wherein the enzyme is present at a concentration of about 0.2 to about 2% by weight.

18. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the enzyme is papain.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-cariogenic sweetener is a sugar alcohol or an artificial sweetener.

21. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-cariogenic sweetener is a polyol of 5 to 12 carbon atoms substituted with 5 to 9 hydroxyl groups.
22. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 20 wherein the sugar alcohol is xylitol, sorbitol, or mannitol.
23. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-cariogenic sweetener is a sugar alcohol present at a concentration of about 25% to about 95% by weight.
24. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein the sugar alcohol is present at a concentration of about 40% to about 85% by weight.
25. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein the sugar alcohol is a sugar alcohol of a disaccharide.
26. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-cariogenic sweetener is an artificial sweetener and is present at a concentration of about 0.1 to about 1% by weight.
27. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 26, wherein the artificial sweetener is a sodium or calcium saccharin salt, a cyclamate salt, the free acid form of saccharin; a dipeptide sweetening agent, 3,6-dihydro-6-methyl-1, or 1,2,3-oxathiazin-4-one-2,2-dioxide.
28. -30. (Canceled)
31. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11 which is a chewing gum, or a chewable and orally soluble tablet, troche, or lozenge.
32. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 31 which is a tablet.

33. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 31 which is a chewing gum and comprises a gum base at a concentration of about 10 to about 40% by weight.
34. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 33 which comprises a gum base at a concentration of about 20 to about 35% by weight.
35. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 33, wherein the gum base is chicle, natural rubber, jelutong, balata, guttapercha, lechi caspi, sorva, guttakay, crown gum, perillo, butadiene-styrene copolymers, polyisobutylene, or isobutylene-isoprene copolymers, or mixtures thereof.
36. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the metal chelating agent is ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid or sodium gluconate and is present at a concentration between 0.01% and 1% by weight.
37. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 36, wherein the metal chelating agent is present at a concentration between 0.1 and 0.5% by weight.
38. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11, wherein the antioxidation agent is sodium bisulfite, a metal gallate, potassium stannate, sodium stannate, ammonium sulfate, 3,5,-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxytoluene, or vitamin E.
39. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 38, wherein the antioxidation agent is potassium stannate.
40. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 38, wherein the antioxidation agent is present at a concentration between about 0.05 to about 1.5% by weight.
41. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 40, wherein the antioxidation agent is present at a concentration between about 0.1 and about 0.75% by weight.

42. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11 further comprising a plasticizing/softening agent which is gelatin, wax, propylene glycol, glycerol, acetylated monoglyceride, glyceryl triacetate, glyceryl diacetate, lecithin, or glycerin, and mixtures thereof.
43. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 42, comprising a combination of lecithin and glycerin in amounts of about 0.5% to about 3.0% by weight lecithin and about 0.1 to about 1.0% by weight glycerin.
44. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11 further comprising calcium salts at a concentration of about 5 to about 20% by weight.
45. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 44, wherein the salt is calcium chloride, calcium nitrate, calcium sulfate, dicalcium phosphate dihydrate, calcium carbonate, calcium citrate, calcium hydrogen pyrophosphate, calcium gluconate, calcium glycerophosphate, calcium hydroxide, calcium oxide, or calcium silicate.
46. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 11 comprising about 0.1 to 3% by weight of an enzyme, 0.5 to 5% by weight of a combination plasticizing/softening ingredient, and about 50 to about 90% by weight of a non-cariogenic sweetener, and, optionally, 10 to 40% by weight of a gum base.